## Propelling a Robust, Diverse Leadership Pipeline at Tata

Tata Consultancy Services
Best Unique or Innovative Leadership
Development Program
December 2016

## Company Background

| Company At-a-Glance | |
| --- | --- |
| Headquarters | New York, NY |
| Year Founded | 1979 |
| Revenue | N/A |
| Employees | 28,500 |
| Global Scale | 43 countries, 7 continents |
| Customers/Output, etc. | Tata Consultancy Services is an IT services, consulting, and business solutions organization that delivers real results to global business. TCS offers a consulting-led, integrated portfolio of IT, BPS, infrastructure, engineering, and assurance services delivered through its Global Network Delivery Model™. |
| Industry | Information Technology, Business Process Outsourcing, Consulting |
| Stock Symbol | N/A |
| Website | www.tcs.com |

## Budget and Timeframe

| Budget and Timeframe | |
|---|---|
| Overall budget | N/A |
| Number of (HR, Learning, Talent) employees involved with the implementation? | 10 |
| Number of Operations or Subject Matter Expert employees involved with the implementation? | 20 |
| Number of contractors involved with implementation | 0 |
| Timeframe to implement | 12 months |
| Start date of the program | August 2012 |

## Business Conditions & Business Needs

Tata Consultancy Services has a culture of preparing internal candidates for senior leadership roles. Some of its most senior leaders including its CEO, CTO, and CFO were recruited from within TCS' ranks. The TCS global succession planning program nurtures potential leaders through formal leadership development programs, providing them with challenging roles to build their leadership capabilities.

Developing in-house talent has helped the company create a robust leadership pipeline. However, sometimes the capabilities required to perform key roles do not exist internally, and sourcing talent from the outside is essential. Opportunities to upgrade talent always exist, and fresh blood injects new ideas and perspectives into an organization.

TCS is constantly seeking local talent in the countries where it operates, particularly in North America. To build on the strong technology and engineering expertise of the TCS workforce, it is targeting professionals with backgrounds in business strategy and consulting. Additionally, the company seeks business-minded professionals who have a creative and innovative approach to solving problems.

Illustrating this need, one TCS leader said, "We have so many people [in the organization] who can tell us how to do this; we need people who will tell us what to do." Now more than ever, its leaders are favoring a creative and initiative culture.

## Overview

The TCS Accelerated Leadership Program (TALP)was initiated to prepare a group of professionally trained managers to help create the next phase of TCS' growth story. These professionals are groomed by current leadership and will learn how to assess market dynamics, anticipate challenges, develop and implement strategy and prepare to take leadership roles upon graduation from the program.

The program has the following main objectives:

- Develop a global leadership group to lead TCS in the future
- Over time, adjust the demographic mix to effectively address the increasingly diverse nature of TCS' business
- Complement current leadership skills with professionally trained managers from top business schools

The classes of 2012 through 2016 were recruited from top business schools in the nation. Upon joining TCS, they were given executive mentors.

TALP graduates are prepared for addressing TCS' global challenges. Therefore, the program looks for recruits who are interested in being part of a global company and are willing to take such challenges head on, wherever they appear on the map.

Our TALPers – as TCS calls them – are assigned to a business unit and then put through a two-year rotational program that takes them through all the facets of business, including sales, pre-sales, operations, strategy, and consulting. The two-year rotational program also includes a stint in TCS' headquarters in India where TALPers spend up to six months working on specific assignments in the business unit.

 TALPers also are assigned various coaches and managers through their two-year rotational period. Their executive mentors remain the same. Upon successful completion of the two-year program, associates are expected to be ready to perform in leadership roles at TCS along the three core themes of:

- Results (Profit and Loss, Running Initiatives, Operational Management)

- Partnerships (Business Advisors, Client/Consulting Partners, Functional SMEs/Advisors)
- Strategic Leadership (Internal and external strategic advisors, corporate development)

**Figure 1: TALP Strategic Intent**
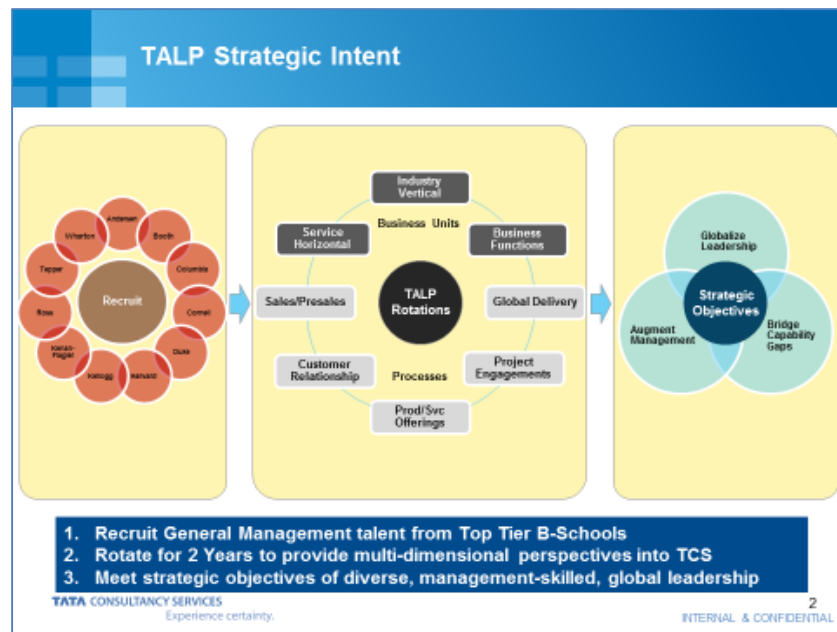


Source: Tata Consultancy Services 2016

## Design of the Program

### Recruitment and Communications

The target schools for TALP are selected based on quality of education as determined by Business School rankings, brand recognition, class size, past recruitment history, and preference for consulting/tech careers among graduates. For the class of 2016, TCS recruited at the following business schools:

- Anderson, University of California at Los Angeles
- Booth, University of Chicago
- Columbia, Columbia University New York
- Fuqua, Duke University

- Harvard, Harvard University

- Johnson, Cornell University

- Kellogg, Northwestern University

- Kenan-Flagler, University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill

- Ross, University of Michigan

- Tepper, Carnegie Mellon University

- Wharton, University of Pennsylvania

Moreover, the company implemented a new recruiting strategy that would help identify talent in specific MBA student organizations. From its pool of target schools, TCS established corporate sponsorships with:

- Chicago Booth Women in Business

- Chicago Booth Corporate Strategy Management Group

- Columbia Women in Business

- Duke Fuqua General Management Club

- Duke Fuqua Armed Forces Association

- UCLA Anderson Women Business Connection

- UCLA Anderson Management Consulting Association

The student organizations helped identify members who were interested in the company's full-time and internship opportunities. TCS effectively networked and engaged with the students by participating in lunch-and-learn sessions, speaking on technology and diversity panels, career symposiums, career fairs, and special invitation dinners.

Additionally, TCS customized its recruitment process, incorporating a case-study approach in lieu of technical interviewing. The case study repository was created internally ensuring that it met all of the requirements established by the business, so the interviewed candidates could be fairly assessed.

To prepare interviewers to select the next wave of leaders, TC provided extensive training on specific core competencies to screen and evaluate.

**Figure 2: Recruitment Flyers**
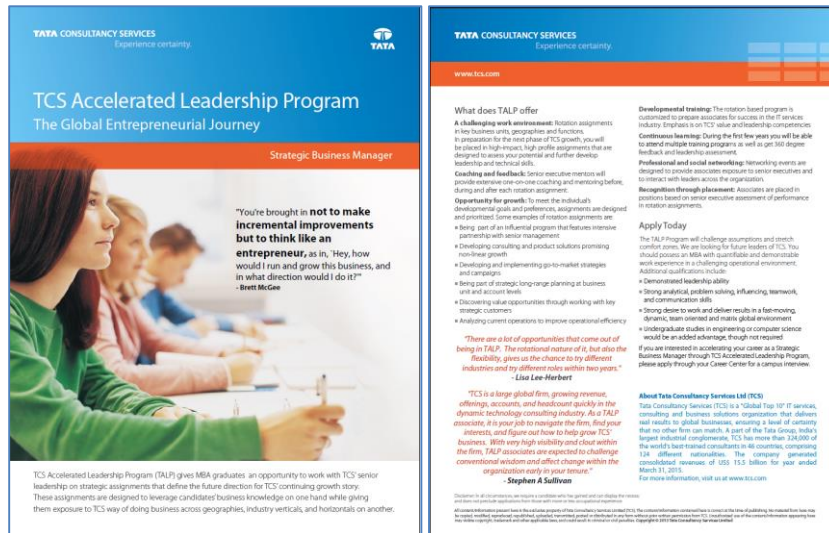
## Five-Day Induction

An incoming cohort starts the program with a full five-day induction that includes business presentations, learning sessions, and networking engagements. Weeks ahead of their start date, they receive a welcome kit that includes two books on the TATA Group's history and culture.

The induction program exposes them to the many business units within the organization. It includes an overview of the larger TATA Group and visits to TATA's Jaguar Land Rover facility and the TAJ Hotel-Pierre in New York City.

In conjunction with the Corporate Social Responsibility team, the new hires participate in community outreach by volunteering at a Food Bank. This exercise is designed to provide them with a sense of the deeply rooted belief in corporate social responsibility, illustrated by Tata's 40-year history of philanthropy and community service.

**Figure 3: Five Day Induction**



*TALPers in action serving 700+ meals in a community service initiative; New York, NY; Jul 2014*

*2014 TALPers getting ready for a CSR activity at a local Food Kitchen; New York, NY; Jul 2014*

*Getting introduced to the JLR product lineup at JLR's North American HQ as part of orientation; Mahwah, NJ; Jul 2014*

Source: Tata Consultancy Services 2016

**Two-Year Rotation Plan**

The program was designed by a cross-functional team and Human Resources. The rotation plan has the following key dimensions:

- **Anchor Business Unit.** The Anchor Business Unit concept supports the structure of the rotational program, and thus provides ownership and accountability on the side of the business. Furthermore, the rotational assignments are designed to supply the associates with broad exposure to functions and other vertical/horizontal units.

Ideally, the Anchor Business bears the duty of designing rotations to prepare the associate for a final role.

- **Mentor.** TALP mentors entrusted with developing the next generation of TCS' global leaders are selected based on their breadth of understanding of TCS business as well as their mentorship qualities. They have the important task of defining the program and sustaining it long term at the global level. The mentor is the primary facilitator in integrating the TALPer into TCS throughout the rotational program, accelerating the associates' assimilation into TCS through ongoing coaching and mentoring. Mentoring may include shadowing, making special assignments to solve a current problem, sharing personal success stories, being a patient sounding board, proactively planning the associate's path through rotations, and advocating for the associates' career success.

- **Coach.** For each of the rotational assignments within the business unit, the TALPer has a coach who guides them on a daily basis. The coach provides TALPers with the necessary information to help them build their professional network within the organization. The coach is also instructed to include the TALPer in client meetings and other C-level meetings with the client.

- **India Rotation.** The India rotation is usually the TALPer's third rotation in the program. The TALPer spends three to six months in any one of the more than 30 locations in India where TCS operates. The work transcends the previous rotation and provides insights into TCS' Global Network Delivery Model and offshore methodology. It also instills a sense of international living and working experience early in the program.

**Figure 4: TALP Program Structure**
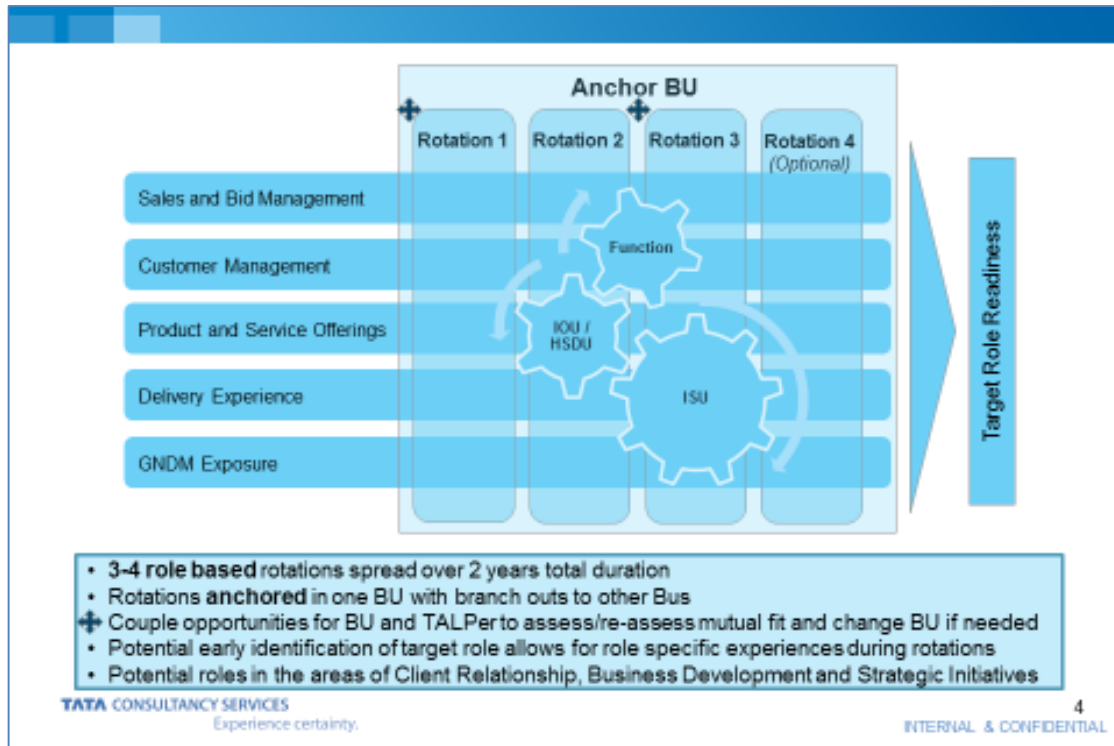


<div align="right">Source: Tata Consultancy Services 2016</div>

## Delivery of the Program

Sponsored by the CEO himself, this program has the necessary visibility and is tracked and monitored closely. The Global Program Director and the team are responsible for a number of key processes that support the program.

**Figure 5: Diagram of the TALP Program Structure**



Source: Tata Consultancy Services 2016

**Figure 6: Program Governance Responsibilities**



Source: Tata Consultancy Services 2016

**Figure 7: Program Execution Responsibilities**



**Mentor**
- Provide guidance to TALPers for rotation planning during the program and for long term role placement after graduation
- Select "right" Coaches for the program
- Enable Coaches to extract maximum value from TALP talent
- Identify impactful assignments/projects for TALP rotations
- Provide executive level insights to TALPers
- Support TALP recruitment efforts in a timely manner

**Coach**
- Provide an "enabling" environment to TALPer on the ground
- Provide assignment/project focused day to day guidance
- Provide ongoing Coaching & feedback
- Align TALPers performance to Mentor's expectation
- Remove obstacles to TALPer's performance
- Facilitate integration of TALPers to broader TCS through introductions to people and activities

**Team Captain**
- Partner with Program Management to determine events
  - Office Hours, Case Study competitions, Club Affiliations, Conferences
- Attend appropriate events on campus
- Work with Program Management to ensure proper staffing at campus events
- Help assemble sell teams (where needed)

**Team Lead**
- Market TALP Program and opportunities to students
  - Conduct office hours/informational calls
  - Connect students to appropriate TCS Associates
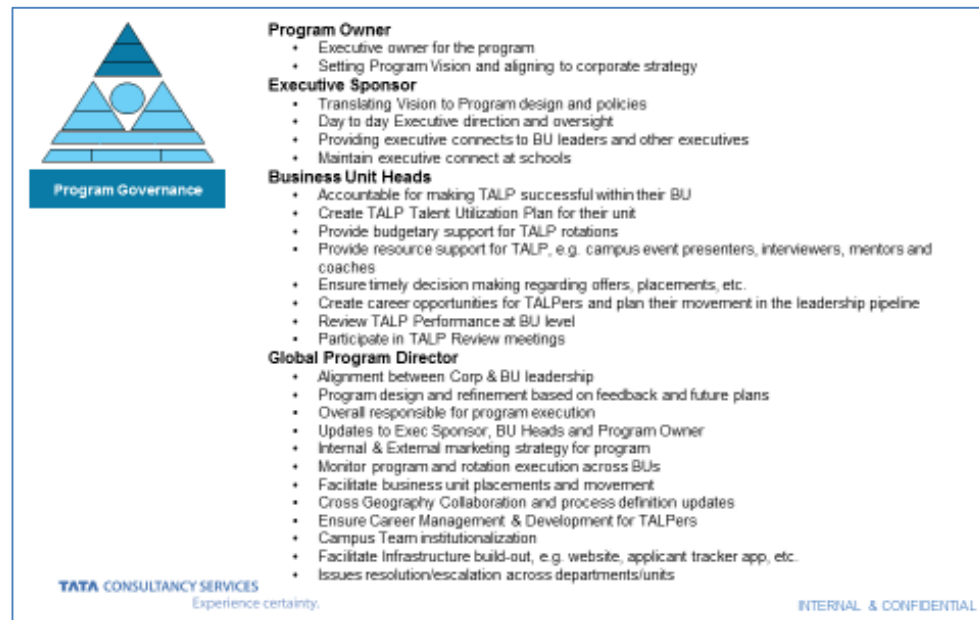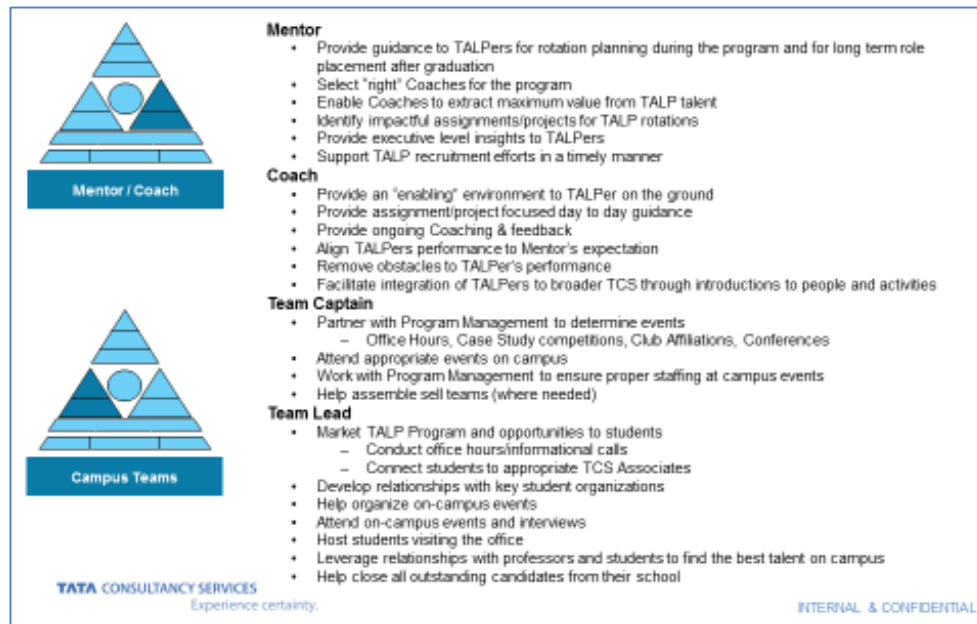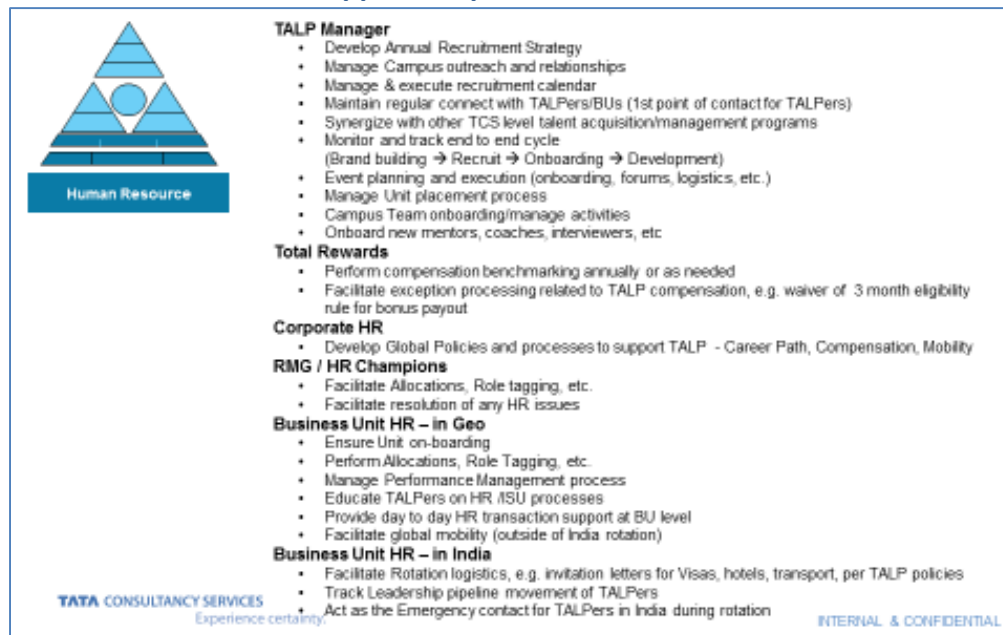- Develop relationships with key student organizations
- Help organize on-campus events
- Attend on-campus events and interviews
- Host students visiting the office
- Leverage relationships with professors and students to find the best talent on campus
- Help close all outstanding candidates from their school

Source: Tata Consultancy Services 2016

**Figure 8: Infrastructure and Support Responsibilities**



**TALP Manager**
- Develop Annual Recruitment Strategy
- Manage Campus outreach and relationships
- Manage & execute recruitment calendar
- Maintain regular connect with TALPers/BUs (1st point of contact for TALPers)
- Synergize with other TCS level talent acquisition/management programs
- Monitor and track end to end cycle
  (Brand building → Recruit → Onboarding → Development)
- Event planning and execution (onboarding, forums, logistics, etc.)
- Manage Unit placement process
- Campus Team onboarding/manage activities
- Onboard new mentors, coaches, interviewers, etc

**Total Rewards**
- Perform compensation benchmarking annually or as needed
- Facilitate exception processing related to TALP compensation, e.g. waiver of 3 month eligibility rule for bonus payout

**Corporate HR**
- Develop Global Policies and processes to support TALP - Career Path, Compensation, Mobility

**RMG / HR Champions**
- Facilitate Allocations, Role tagging, etc.
- Facilitate resolution of any HR issues

**Business Unit HR – in Geo**
- Ensure Unit on-boarding
- Perform Allocations, Role Tagging, etc.
- Manage Performance Management process
- Educate TALPers on HR /ISU processes
- Provide day to day HR transaction support at BU level
- Facilitate global mobility (outside of India rotation)

**Business Unit HR – in India**
- Facilitate Rotation logistics, e.g. invitation letters for Visas, hotels, transport, per TALP policies
- Track Leadership pipeline movement of TALPers
- Act as the Emergency contact for TALPers in India during rotation

Source: Tata Consultancy Services 2016

Additionally, the following governance reviews, calls and meetings help the program team track, monitor and report progress:

**Figure 9: Reported Progress**

| Mode | Frequency | Attendees |
|---|---|---|
| **Audio Call** (one on one) | Monthly | TALP Program team and TALPer |
| **Audio Call** | Quarterly | TALPer-Mentor-Coach-Program Team |
| **Meeting** | Bi-Annual | All TALPers (TALP Forum) |
| **Audio Call** | Quarterly | Mentor-Program Team-Executive Sponsor |
| **Meeting** | Monthly | Program Team Review by Program director and Executive Sponsor |
| **Updates via mail** | Quarterly | Program Team to Executive Sponsor |

Source: Tata Consultancy Services 2016

## Training the Coaches

A great deal of effort is spent training the coaches. All coaches must attend a web-based training module called "Make People Matter" and attend a two-day program on "Coaching for Success." Both modules were internally developed by one of TCS' certified coaches.

**Figure 10: Coaching for Success**



Source: Tata Consultancy Services 2016

## Drawing up the Career Paths

The key challenge TCS faced while putting together the program was providing visibility to the career paths for the TALPers. While there are career paths laid out for all its employees, TCS put together separate paths for the TALPers so that they knew early in the program the direction of their careers. This issue was resolved by working very closely with career management and leadership identification teams to draw up career paths that the TALPers could identify with and understand.

This process helped all stakeholders involved in the program design, development, deployment and strategic objectives.

**Figure 11: TALP Career Paths**
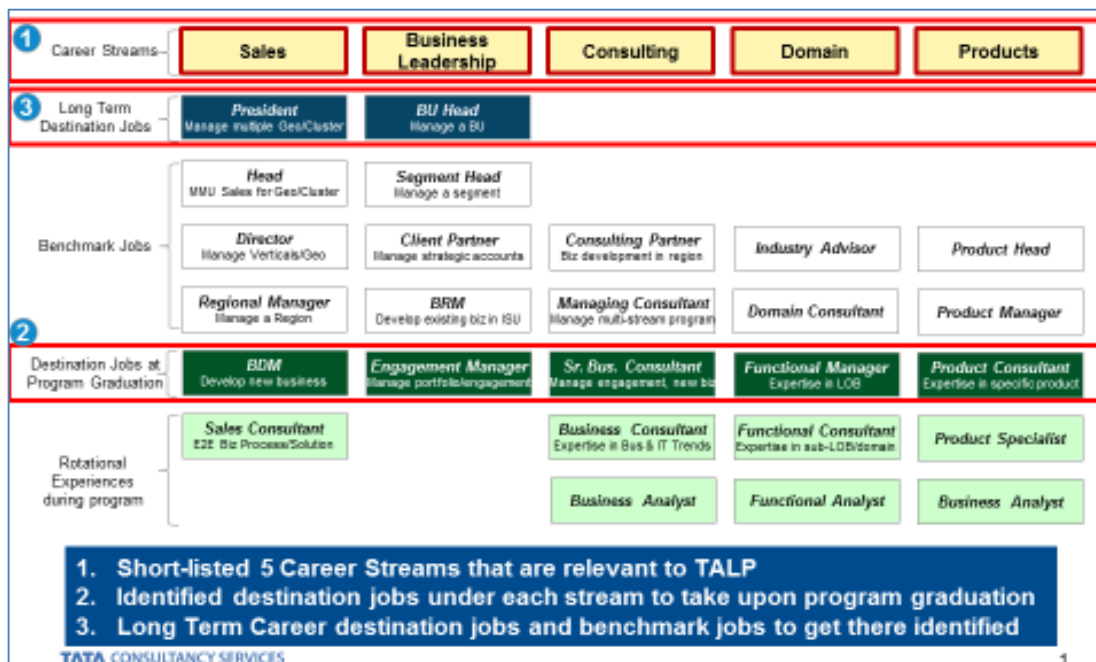


Source: Tata Consultancy Services 2016

**Figure 12: Leading to Business Leadership**
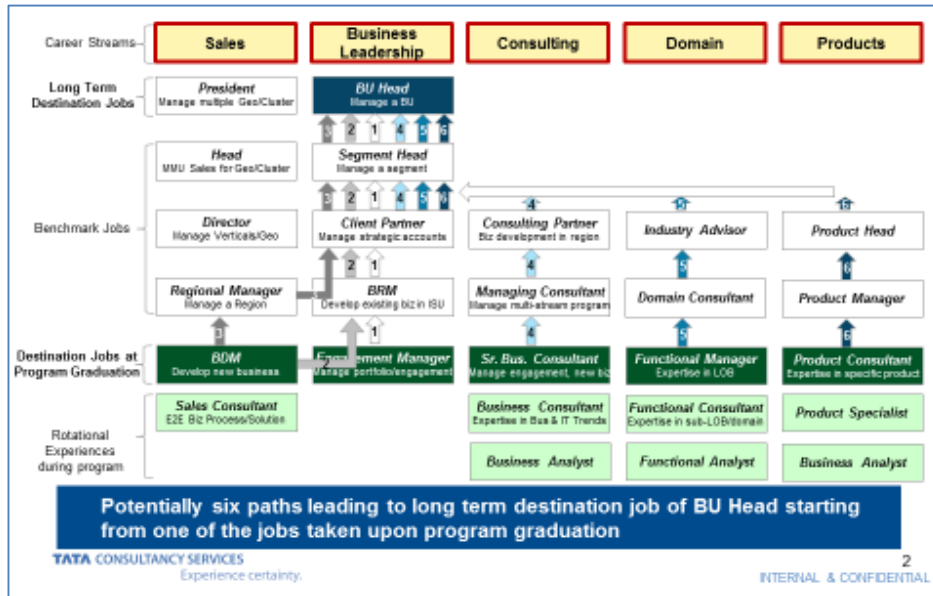


Source: Tata Consultancy Services 2016

**Figure 13: Leading to Sales Leadership**
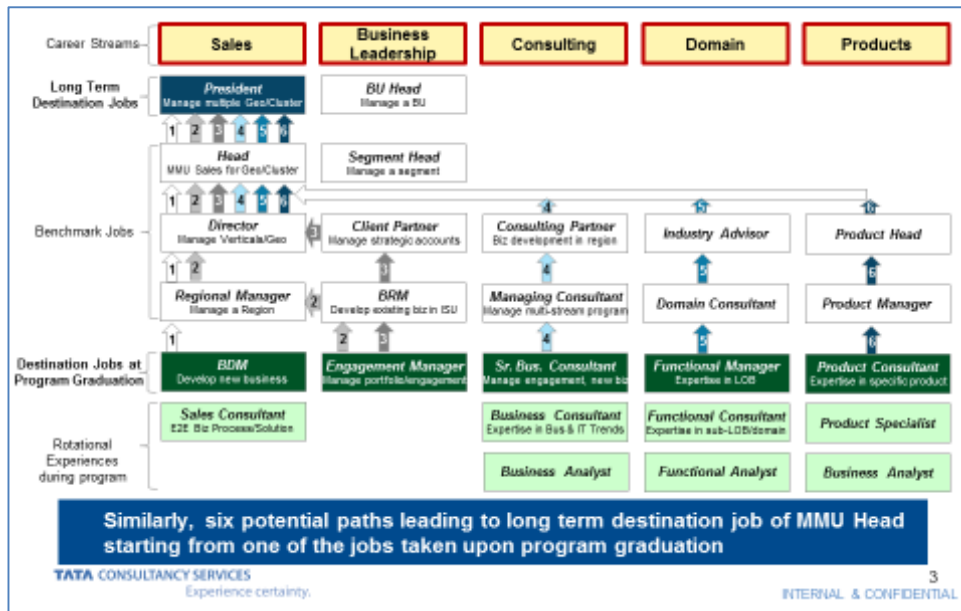


Source: Tata Consultancy Services 2016

## Measureable Benefits

One of the measurable benefits is TCS' ability to attract an increasingly diversified pool of candidates. In the past four years, the number of candidates interested in the program has steadily increased from 30 to 120. All of the graduate TALPers are in roles that will lead them to leadership positions within two years. They are currently Client Partners, Business Development Managers, Business Relationship Managers, and Strategic Partners.

The TALPers have been able to provide solutions to complex projects and assignments in areas such as NextGen Strategy, Business Development, and assignments in Digital and Innovation. The stated objectives of the program –creating a diverse, global leadership pipeline – have been achieved. TCS leaders continue to support this program and look forward to having more candidates to meet the demand for business leaders.

## Overall

The program has been a success in terms of achieving its objectives and propelling TCS's leadership pipeline. The key findings and lessons learned are that it takes a great many continuous conversations to keep all stakeholders engaged. It is easy for stakeholders to slip into the routine, and TCS had to make conscious efforts at keeping interventions engaging, interesting and intellectually stimulating.

For the future, the company intends to continue this program plans to add to it by building a repository of case studies of real-life problems that units or clients are facing.

TCS will use these case studies not only as a way to get innovative solutions, but also to get the TALPers to work in teams and get assessed for their competencies. The company intends to have at least three different complex case studies spanning multiple dimensions of technology, business, strategy and domain each year for the TALPers.

These case studies give TCS an opportunity to build a repertoire of very different problem statements and simultaneously create a repository of innovative, implementable solutions – a win-win situation for the TALPers and TCS. Additionally, the program will be expanded to the UK, Europe, and India, with more schools and mentors from those geographies.

## About Brandon Hall Group

Brandon Hall Group is a HCM research and advisory services firm that provides insights around key performance areas, including Learning and Development, Talent Management, Leadership Development, Talent Acquisition, and HR/Workforce Management. With more than 10,000 clients globally and more than 20 years of delivering world-class research and advisory services, Brandon Hall Group is focused on developing research that drives performance in emerging and large organizations, and provides strategic insights for executives and practitioners responsible for growth and business results.

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